

Conservation Connections



St. Louis Regional Newsletter Missouri Department of Conservation

December 2011

Hiking in a Winter Wonderland

By Angie Weber, Community Conservation Planner

While many people think that spring, summer and fall are the ideal times to enjoy all that nature has to offer, the winter months are wonderful as well. There is nothing more exhilarating than a hike through the woods on a crisp winter morning. With the forests in their dormant state, you can really appreciate the hills, valleys, and streams that form a beautiful natural landscape. In addition, leaf-bare trees make it easier to spot deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, bald eagles, and other animals.

This year during the holidays instead of spending all your time indoors, grab your family and head outdoors to discover nature and experience a winter wonderland. There are numerous conservation areas within 30 minutes of the St. Louis area. Depending on how much time you have or how adventurous you want to be, here are three great conservation areas to experience and enjoy.

August G. Beckemeier Conservation Area located in St. Louis County was donated to the Missouri Department of Conservation by Minna Waldmann in 1996. This 54-acre area is located in the city of Chesterfield off Olive Street Road, approximately 1.3 miles north of Faust County Park. A half-mile trail loops through the area offering wintertime views of the Missouri River valley.

Rockwoods Reservation located in St. Louis County was established in 1938, making it one of the oldest Conservation Areas. The 1,880-acre area provides opportunities to enjoy Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife resources through its various hiking trails ranging from as little as 300 yards to over 3 miles in length. Many of the trails on this area offer spectacular views into the valley below.

The LaBarque Creek Conservation Area located in Jefferson County contains incredible scenery that includes forested hills, steep valleys, beautiful bluffs and shelter caves carved into St. Peter sandstone. The watershed is a refuge for rare and habitat-specific plants, including some species of conservation concern. The area can be explored by hiking the 3 mile loop trail through the area. Winter is a great time to hike this area since below freezing temperatures offer the opportunity to view frozen waterfalls.

Instead of retreating indoors the next time the mercury drops, get out and explore a conservation area near you and experience firsthand Missouri's winter wonderland. For more information, please visit the Missouri Department of Conservation's website at www.mdc.mo.gov and search for the conservation atlas.



Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

December 2011

801 Strodtman Road, St. Louis, MO 63138 Office hours are Wednesday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.;
Saturday - Sunday from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**For reservations call (314) 877- 6014 Wednesday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.;
Saturday and Sunday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-270 north take the Riverview Drive exit (last Missouri exit); go north approximately 2.8 miles. Riverview Drive becomes Columbia Bottom Road at its intersection with Larimore Road. The entrance is on the right-hand side.

Visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/areas/bottom

2 or 3 Homemade For the Holidays

Friday 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(All Ages) What do grass skirts and tube socks have in common? No, they're not winter wear for Hawaiians. Besides being made from plant materials, each can be used to make fun and beautiful holiday gifts such as prairie grass dolls and snowman bird feeders. We'll have all the materials and, after a short introduction, you can make your very own homemade gifts for the holidays. All you need to bring is your imagination. Please register for one class only. (Registration begins November 18.)

4 Winter Birds

Sunday 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

(All Ages) Want to learn more about birds in the winter? Join us for a short bird walk outside followed by hot chocolate in our visitor center. Discover what species can be found braving the cold in the winter and make a simple bird feeder to take home. Grab a friend because enjoying winter isn't just for the birds! (Reservations begin November 23.)



8 Owls are Outstanding

Thursday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Homeschoolers) Whooo knows why owls are so mysterious? We can dispel some of the myths and legends by learning more about these nighttime wonders. Let's talk about what kind of owls can be seen in Missouri. We will discover owls' outstanding adaptations then dive into nature by dissecting owl pellets. (Reservations begin November 24.)



10 Prowling for Owls Under the Full Moon

Saturday 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(Ages 10 & Up) Who cooks for you? Whoo cooks for you all? Was that a barred owl or a great horned owl? We will help you to discover the difference between their courting calls as we take a quiet stroll from the slough to the canoe/kayak access. Learn about the adaptations that enable owls and other nocturnal creatures to live their lives while we sleep. Dress warmly for cold weather. Meet at parking lot "L." (Reservations begin November 26.)



17 Regal Eagles

Saturday 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

(All Ages) Winter is coming and so are the eagles! Did you know the bald eagle became our national emblem in 1782? What about the adaptations which make these magnificent birds so special? Let's learn about eagles, including how these birds became endangered in Missouri and how their populations have made a tremendous comeback. We will help you discover nature by sharing with you some of the best spots to watch eagles. (Reservations begin December 3.)

31 New Year's Eve Walk

Saturday 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(Ages 10 & Up) End the year with a calm, quiet stroll in the crisp, moonless night along the wooded path at Columbia Bottom. We will listen to and discover the sounds of the night shift creatures and learn about the adaptations which allow them to conduct their activities in the dark at this cold time of the year. We'll spend a few minutes at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers before we head back. Dress warmly for the weather. Meet at parking lot "M." (Reservations begin December 14.)

August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 Office hours are Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For reservations call (636) 441-4554 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on Hwy D for approximately 2 miles. The area entrance is on the north side of Hwy D. Visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/busch

3 Discover Nature

Families: Use a Compass to Find Your Way – Laser Night Hike

Saturday 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.



(Families Ages 10 & Up)

Test your orienteering skills navigating at night, off trail! After a quick

refresher on compass use, your team will move in the dark of night using flashlights and laser pointers to find 13 natural and manmade landmarks. Plan to cover two to three miles through woods and fields alongside your family and Naturalists. No trail to follow, only a compass and map with bearings to find your way. Gain orienteering confidence as you experience the elements of darkness and sense of accomplishment as soon as the first landmark is found. You will learn just how accurate navigation with a compass truly is. Talk about unforgettable! (Reservations begin November 18.)

3 Holiday Craft Creation Station

Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

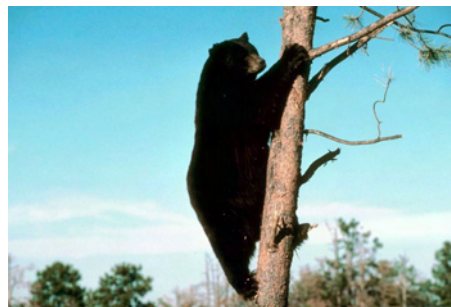
(Families) Spend the day making bark mantel pieces, tree cookie coasters, cards from recycled paper, custom wrapping paper and much more as you travel from station to station. Decorate your home and give the gift of nature this holiday season. Families are encouraged to come and go as you please. (Reservations begin November 18.)



10 Foxes, Coyotes, and Bears, Oh My!

Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

(Ages 7 - 12) Yes, Dorothy, there really are foxes, coyotes, bears and several more flesh eating mammals in Missouri. Come and learn about some of our most adaptable and effective hunters. These animals are beautiful, crafty and intelligent. Some may visit your backyard even if you don't see them. Find out why it is so important that we allow these efficient predators to flourish. (Reservations begin November 23.)



10 Night Hike - Busch Hiking/Biking Trail

Saturday 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

(Families) Experience the sounds of the night during a moderate hike at the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area. We will hike the 3.5 mile Busch Hiking/Biking Trail in hopes of hearing coyotes howling and owls hooting. Enjoy a peaceful evening in nature under the full moon. (Reservations begin November 23.)

17 Clark Hike - Winter Food for Wildlife

Saturday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

(Ages 12 & up) The Weldon Spring Conservation Area supports a wide range of wildlife during the winter. Have you ever wondered what natural food sources are available for these animals? Join us for an invigorating 5.3 mile hike through the hills of Weldon as we look for nuts, berries and other food that support wildlife during the winter. (Reservations begin December 2.)

17 Bald Eagles

Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

(Ages 7 - 10) Missouri is one of the leading states supporting bald eagles. Missouri's combination of big rivers for fishing and tall trees for roosting makes our state an ideal home to these majestic birds. Come learn about the interesting lives of bald eagles and their lives in Missouri. (Reservations begin December 2.)



Rockwoods Reservation

December 2011

2751 Glencoe Road, Wildwood, MO 63038 Office hours are Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For reservations call (636) 458-2236 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-44 take Hwy 109 north 4 miles to Woods Avenue; left on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road. From Manchester Road take Hwy 109 south 2 miles to Woods Avenue; right on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road.

Visit <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/regions/st-louis/rockwoods-reservation>

3 Bird Feeders

Saturday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Families) Winter is a hard time for birds to find food and survive cold temperatures with snow covered ground. Help your backyard birds brave the winter by providing a bird feeder at your home. Join this program to build a bird feeder to support birds and bring nature up close for your family. (Reservations begin November 18.)

6 Foxes, Coyotes, and Bears, Oh My!

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

(Ages 7 - 12) Yes, Dorothy, there really are foxes, coyotes, bears and several more flesh eating mammals in Missouri. Come and learn about some of our most adaptable and effective hunters. These animals are beautiful, crafty and intelligent. Some may visit your backyard even if you don't see them. Find out why it is so important that we allow these efficient predators to flourish. (Reservations begin November 22.)

9 Owl Prowl

Friday 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(Families) Who's that hooting it up each December evening? Owls, that's who. Learn about Missouri owls and what makes them such effective night time hunters and why they hoot so much this time of year. Please dress for the weather. We will go outside to look and listen for these elusive nocturnal predators. (Reservations begin November 23.)

22 Winter in the Woods

Thursday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Ages 3 - 7) The forest may seem quiet and devoid of life in the winter, but look a little closer and you'll see it's just not true! Join us on the shortest day of the year to look for signs of animals. Learn how Missouri animals survive the winter and make a tasty take-home treat for the winter animals that live in your backyard. (Reservations begin December 8.)

Maple Sugaring at Rockwoods Reservation

It's almost here! The maple sugaring season is just around the corner. Are you ready? Beginning in January, we'll host programs that teach you to identify sugar maple trees and proper technique for tapping and hanging buckets. In February, look for programs that teach you how to collect, cook and finish your sap into delicious maple syrup.

Don't miss the Maple Sugar Festival on Saturday, February 4, 2012. Watch for details in your January and February editions of *Conservation Connections*.

Forest Park Office

5595 Grand Drive, St. Louis, MO 63112 Office hours are Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For reservations call (314) 877-1309 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-44 take Kingshighway north to West Pine Boulevard, turn left. Follow West Pine to Lindell, turn left onto Lindell. Continue on Lindell past Union Drive to Cricket, turn left. Take first available right onto Grand Drive. The Visitors Center is the tan brick, red tile-roofed building with arched windows, and a clock tower. It will be on the right side of the street. Free parking is available in the double lot to the left or on the street.



7 Hike in the Forest

Wednesday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

(Ages 7 & up) Join us on foot as we venture inside Kennedy Forest to experience sights and sounds found in the daytime. This trek is a great way to get outside, connect with nature, and be healthy. Please wear comfortable shoes, bring a water bottle and dress warmly! This program meets outdoors under the pavilion in the John F. Kennedy Memorial Forest. (Reservations begin November 16.)

Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

December 2011

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304

Hours are: December 1 - March 31 open Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

April 1 - November 30 open Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., and Tuesday from 2 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Closed all State and Federal Holidays.

For program reservations call (636) 441-4554 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From I-40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on Hwy D for approximately 5 miles. The area entrance is on the south side of Hwy D. Visit <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/ranges/busch>

1 Gateway Claybusters: Kick-Off Meeting

Thursday 6:30 p.m. - ?

(Ages 11 - 18 accompanied by adult/guardian) Welcome to the 2012 season kick-off for the Gateway Claybusters. This informational meeting will be at the main office at Busch Wildlife CA. See if you have what it takes to be part of a national championship winning trapshooting team. (Reservations begin October 1.)

4 Youth Hunter Education Challenge: Kick-Off Meeting

Sunday 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

We will be hosting a YHEC informational meeting for youths ages 11 through 18 interested in participating in the 2012 YHEC competition in the administration building at the August A. Busch Conservation Area. The competition includes rifle, shotgun, archery, muzzleloader, orienteering, wildlife identification, a hunter safety trail, and a written exam. Interested youths must attend this meeting with a parent. For more information contact Frank Scott at 636-673-1283.

14 Burger And Sausage Making 101

Wednesday 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(All Ages) Meat eaters needed.

Qualifications: must want to try the tastiest burgers and sausages you've ever had and learn how to make your own meaty delights. If you fit these qualifications, this is the perfect class for you. All you need to bring is your appetite. Join our expert cooks as they show you how to process, prepare, and use the right mixtures for tasty venison burgers which you, your family and friends will enjoy. Other things that will be covered are equipment, casings, cures, smoked meats, and food safety guidelines. This program will be held at the Busch CA office building. (Reservations begin November 14.)



15 Venison Cooking

Thursday 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(All Ages) Well, the hunt is over and you got yourself some venison? Need help cooking it? This class will provide you with some recipes and tips for venison cooking. Our volunteer cooks can give you hands-on training and will share their venison cooking secrets. They will give you the ability to make a tasty venison dinner that you can prepare to your own taste. This program will be held at the Busch CA office building. (Reservations begin November 15.)

25 Range Closed for Christmas Day Holiday



The Missouri Department of Conservation is celebrating our 75th anniversary. On Nov. 3, 1936, voters approved Amendment 4, creating our agency and the beginning of Missouri's unique, citizen-led conservation story. Many of the successful partnerships and programs that have helped to restore the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of Missouri, as well as the challenges ahead, will be highlighted throughout the next year.

Watch for more information in the *Missouri Conservationist* magazine and on the web: www.mdc.mo.gov

Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

December 2011

1100 Antire Road, High Ridge, MO 63049

Range Hours: May 1 - August 31: Wednesday 1 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Thursday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

September 1 - April 30: Wednesday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and all State and Federal Holidays.

For program reservations call (636) 938-9548 Wednesday through Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice. From the east/St. Louis: I-44 west to Beaumont/Antire Road, exit 269. Left over I-44 to Antire Road. Right on Antire road. One hundred feet to entrance. Left into driveway. From the west/Eureka: I-44 east to Beaumont/Antire Road, exit 269. Follow exit lane around to top.

Visit <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/ranges/henges>

4 Trigger Time - Handgun

Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

(Ages 18 & up) Trigger Time is "hands-on," personal instruction designed to make you a better marksman. There is no classroom time, just expert one-on-one instruction from one of our highly qualified staff. The instructor will observe shooting by each individual participant and offer suggestions on grip, stance, trigger-pull, sight alignment, and the safe handling of firearms – all as may be relevant. Participants will be required to provide their own handguns and ammunition (at least 50 rounds). A spouse may accompany. (Reservations begin November 4.)



4 Introduction to Youth Trapshooting Team

Sunday 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

(Ages 9 & up) In cooperation with the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation and the Amateur Trapshooting Association, Henges Range continues its sixth year in the youth trapshooting program. Eligible participants include students from elementary school through high school. Parents and interested participants are invited to meet with the coaches for a discussion of the program, what is involved, and the opportunities available in this competitive shooting skill. (No reservation required.)

14 Discover Hunting: Predators

Wednesday 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



(Ages 11 & up) Predator hunting is a great pastime and can be done at times of the year when other hunting seasons are not open. Not only is this sport fun and exciting, it can be very inexpensive to get into. This introductory program will cover the basics of predator hunting. We will talk about equipment needed, set-ups, calling, decoys and other topics. Information covered will be basic as well as some advanced tactics. (Reservations begin November 14.)



25 Range Closed for Christmas Day Holiday

27 New Gun 101

Tuesday 10 a.m. - Noon

(Ages 9 & up) Got a new .22 rifle for Christmas? Maybe a new deer rifle? Come to the range and you'll learn basic operation, safety, maintenance, and spend some time learning to shoot that new gun. Bring your instruction manual if you have one. (Reservations begin November 27.)

For a complete listing of all Hunter Education and Bowhunter Education classes throughout the region, visit the web at www.mdc.mo.gov and click on the "Hunter Education" link on the right of the page.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122

Building hours: Tuesday through Saturday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday and Monday: Closed

Area and trails: Open seven days a week 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. during Central Standard Time and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during Daylight Saving Time.

7 Nature's Niche:

Breakfast with the Birds

Wednesday 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

(Ages 50 & up) On a cold winter's morning there is nothing like having a breakfast of black oil sunflower seeds, or maybe a hot cup of coffee and a sweet roll. That would, of course, depend upon whether you are bird or human! So, while the birds feed outside, we'll enjoy the coffee and sweet rolls as we identify the birds and watch their behavior from the comfort of the viewing windows. After that, weather permitting, there will be a short optional bird walk on Tanglevine Trail. (Reservations begin November 23.)



Managed Hunt Notice:

Powder Valley building and trails will be closed from January 7 through January 9 for a small managed archery hunt. More information on the next page.

13 How Wildlife Weathers Winter

Tuesday 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

(Ages 5 & up) Winter in Missouri can be cold, stormy and icy. A few months ago many kinds of animals were here enjoying our lush summertime. What are all those animals doing now? Some have migrated, a few have hibernated - but what about all the others? We will consider eight different strategies wild animals use for weathering winter, and illustrate them with activities and crafts. We will go on a winter walk too, so please dress for the weather. (Reservations begin November 29.)

16 Discover Nature Families: Owl Prowl

Friday 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

(Families) Owls do more than just give a hoot! In fact, Missouri owls are on the prowl, and not just for food! Come to Powder Valley and discover owl behavior, adaptations and courting rituals that are taking place for the next few months throughout our state. A fun-filled evening is waiting for you. Take a hike and try your hand at calling owls, dissect owl pellets and enjoy making a simple owl craft. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. (Reservations begin December 2.)

24 Christmas Eve

The nature center will be closing at 1:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve so our staff and volunteers can celebrate with their families.

MANAGED DEER HUNTS -A MANAGEMENT TOOL

Missouri offers numerous managed deer hunts for archery, crossbow, muzzleloading and modern firearms from mid-September through January. These hunts achieve deer management goals while also providing additional hunting opportunity. Hunters are selected by a weighted random drawing system.

One of the new hunts this year will be held at Powder Valley. The deer population for the 112 acres is more than five times the desired density. Long term, the effects of this level of deer numbers include significant habitat destruction, a higher disease rate, and stress. The area will be closed from January 7 through January 9 for a small managed archery hunt. This will be a "doe first" hunt, as doe numbers directly impact population growth.

Hunters applied for managed hunts between July 1 and August 15. The drawing results were posted on-line and can be viewed through December 31. Those selected must purchase a special Managed Deer Hunting Permit. Deer taken at a managed hunt do not count toward the regular season bag limit.

Thirty managed deer hunts and three managed *youth* deer hunts are being held in the St. Louis Region during the 2011-2012 season. You can visit http://mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/resources/2010/03/fdt2011_web_opt1.pdf for a complete list.

Some areas with managed hunts in progress stay open, while others close entirely or limit access to some portion of the area. For your safety, and to allow hunters a fair hunt, please follow instructions posted regarding managed hunts at those areas.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

For reservations call (314) 301-1500

December 2011

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on our waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with five days notice. From I-44 take Lindbergh (Route 61/67) to Watson Road. Go west on Watson Road to Geyer Road. Go north on Geyer Road to Cragwold Road then one mile west on Cragwold Road. Visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/powder

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE!

On October 21, 2011, the Missouri Department of Conservation unveiled a new water feature in the wildlife viewing area at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center. The funding for the feature was provided by the Kathryn G. Favre Foundation for Animals through the Missouri Conservation Heritage



Foundation. The feature was constructed by Nature's Re-Creations, LLC and landscaped by Wind-in-Oaks, LLC Landscaping and Garden Service.

The ribbon was cut at the nature center's 20th anniversary ceremony. Present at the ribbon cutting were the Kathryn G. Favre Foundation for Animals Board, Kirkwood Des Peres Area Chamber of Commerce, Missouri Department of Conservation Commissioner Don Johnson and MDC staff.

Volunteers Art Paule and Pat Harris were honored for their 20 years of service as volunteers at the nature center. Pictured to the right with Pat and Art are (left to right) Catherine McGrane, Commissioner Don Johnson, and Tamie Yegge.



Over 1300 visitors enjoyed Saturday's celebration which featured *WildHeart*, *Fishin' Magicians*, and many fun family activities and crafts.

Kirkwood Mayor Art McDonnell cut the anniversary cake during the celebration on Saturday. Mayor McDonnell is joined by Mike Huffman, Outreach and Education Division Chief, and Tamie Yegge, Nature Center Manager.



Volunteer Milestones

Alma Dulz	5000 hours
Ginny Bilbro	400 hours
Lee Halbeck	2000 hours
Jack McGinnis	5500 hours
Art Paule	5600 hours
John Sanders	500 hours
Dick Wasson	5500 hours
Neva Wasson	5500 hours

Powder Valley Art Exhibit Discover Nature with Us

Powder Valley Nature Center staff and volunteers would like to share their love of nature with you. Although we are not professional photographers, we share a common passion for our natural world. Please stop in and discover nature through our eyes.